

If I were dying

by Steven Pirani

The doctor told me:
"You have 24 hours
to live.

no more, no less."

Some cancer, or a stroke, or a rose of blood in my brain.
He didn't say.

Not that it even matters, once it happens.

I bought a donut.

Bavarian cream — reminds me of my mother.
Reminds me to avoid being superficial.

"It's not chocolate frosted,
Take a bite.

You see?"

I'm still too broke to leave a tip,
So I leave a soul.

I take a nap.

"The next time I do that, I'll never stop."

Waking up is unique,
when you consider the odds.

Midday,

I ask someone for directions,
to a place I've been to before.

"Just up that way,
you can't miss it."

But I will.

By 2 p.m. — 18 hours left —
I shop for groceries.

It's different, when you'll never taste them.
Looking back,
I bought all the things I always wanted.

Call my mom at 5:30 that evening.

"Hello honey, how are you."
"That's good to hear"
"I love you too."

She has no idea
And I can't tell her. This part hurts.

That night I watch a movie
for the first time in years.

What a joy it is to sit still.

The last name on the credits,
"Elaine Kingston."

I tell myself I'll remember her name,

Until the day I die.

4 hours left and I call my work.

"I quit, it's nothing personal."

3 hours and I call my friends.

"I love you."

"I love you."

"See you soon."

I make pasta for the last time,
and I have a beer for the last time.

I piss for the last time,
I masturbate, for the last time.

I have an hour left to burn,
and the sun is coming up.

Sitting on my roof, I wonder what will happen:
If I'll collapse,
Or disappear,
 or be carried away.

Will it be tragic?
Will the donut guy, and my mother, and the man I asked for
directions,
 will they come out and mourn me?

My friends, where will they go?
Elaine Kingston, what will she do?

The sun is in my eyes now, it's the morning
and somewhere they're filling bavarian cream donuts

 and what a joy it is to sit still.

